United Nations CRC/C/SR.2285

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General
23 May 2018

Original: English

Committee on the Rights of the Child
Seventy-eighth session

Summary record of the 2285th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 15 May 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Winter

Contents

Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Argentina (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@un.org).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.

GE.18-07948 (E) 220518 230518

1807948

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Argentina (*continued*) (CRC/C/ARG/5-6; CRC/C/ARG/Q/5-6 and CRC/C/ARG/Q/5-6/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Argentina took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Fariña** (Argentina) said that the Ministry of Health had developed a number of policy documents on the prevention of suicide among adolescents. The main triggers of suicide among children and adolescents in Argentina included sexual abuse and ill-treatment, drug abuse, mental illness, serious physical illness, unwanted pregnancy and suicide contagion.

3. Promoting breastfeeding to reduce the risks of obesity and sudden infant death was one of the major policy objectives of the Ministry of Health's National Directorate of Maternal and Child Health. According to the most recent national breastfeeding survey, conducted in 2017, 42 per cent of infants up to 6 months of age were breastfed exclusively, which was an improvement on the results of the previous survey, which had been conducted two years earlier.

4. The Advisory Commission on Breastfeeding had been established more than 20 years earlier and was composed of representatives of a number of social welfare institutions, scientific societies and such non-governmental organizations as La Leche League Argentina. The Commission met two or three times a year. The activities carried out by the Ministry of Health in connection with breastfeeding included the efforts made as part of the baby-friendly hospital initiative. Those efforts involved awareness-raising, training and assessment and were made at the country's 65 baby-friendly hospitals and at 20 baby-friendly primary health-care centres, the number of which was expected to double in the coming years. Other activities were organized to help women continue breastfeeding their children as they returned to work from maternity leave. Employers were encouraged to participate in breastfeeding week. There was even a breastfeeding hotline. The Ministry of Health ensured compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes as part of its efforts to promote the baby-friendly hospital initiative.

5. HIV infection rates in Argentina had stabilized several years earlier. In 2017, 6,500 persons had been diagnosed as HIV positive, and in all there were some 120,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in Argentina. Efforts were being made to reduce the mother-to-child infection rate of around 5 per cent. Thirty-nine health-care centres had earned a label specifically stating that they were friendly to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. In 2017, the HIV hotline had responded to more than 6,000 queries. In addition, training had been given to health-care personnel working with adolescents in a number of provinces to enable them to carry out accelerated HIV tests and provide the necessary services to adolescents who tested positive. Initiatives had also been carried out to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, among adolescents.

6. The country's interpretative declaration on article 24 (f) of the Convention, on family planning, did not have the effect of a reservation. Legislative developments subsequent to the declaration, nationally and in 18 of the country's 24 first-level administrative divisions, had in any event rendered it obsolete. As part of a national plan to reduce unintended pregnancy among adolescents, information on family planning was provided in schools, and efforts were being made to increase the use of contraceptives, including long-term contraceptive methods.

7. Increasingly, genital surgery on intersex children was postponed until the children themselves could express their views on the matter, especially if the surgery led to irreversible changes. Such infants generally underwent surgery or other medical procedures, such as gonadal biopsies, for medical reasons alone.

8. A protocol on the comprehensive care to be provided to women who had the right to abortion, which was legal in certain circumstances, such as a pregnancy resulting from rape,

had been updated in 2016. It had been updated to ensure that new legislative developments were taken into account.

9. **Mr. Rodríguez Reyes** said that he wished to know whether the State party had a system for collecting data on the number and kind of medical procedures undergone by children with intersex conditions. He also wished to know whether persons who had been put through genital surgery without their consent could seek justice in the State party's courts.

10. **Ms. Fariña** (Argentina) said that Argentina did not have centralized data on the medical procedures undergone by intersex children. Persons who had undergone such procedures as children could turn to the courts for redress under Act No. 26.743, the Gender Identity Act.

11. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that he wondered whether, in its efforts to promote breastfeeding, the State party was taking steps to ensure that maternity leaves in provinces where such leaves were less than 14 weeks were lengthened. As the State party had only two more baby-friendly hospitals than in 2010, when it had previously appeared before the Committee, he asked whether efforts were still being made to encourage the country's hospitals to seek that designation.

12. **Ms. Fariña** (Argentina) said that women who had given birth were entitled to at least three months' leave throughout the country. Consideration was being given to lengthening periods of parental leave for mothers and fathers. The 65 baby-friendly hospitals did not necessarily include the 63 of 2010, as some had closed and others had opened. Efforts were still being made to promote breastfeeding.

13. It could be difficult for women in the provinces to obtain an abortion to which they were entitled. Nonetheless, the Supreme Court had ruled that health-care personnel could be held accountable for their failure to take account of a patient's legitimate grounds for an abortion or their use of delaying tactics. An individual practitioner had the right to object to performing an abortion, but an institution did not. In the event of such a conscientious objection, the director of the institution was responsible for ensuring that the procedure was performed.

14. **The Chair** asked what would happen if all the doctors in a given hospital objected to performing an abortion.

15. **Ms. Fariña** (Argentina) said that the practical legalization of abortion in limited circumstances had not been carried out in the same way in every province in the country. In the provinces of Catamarca and Santa Fe, for example, there were groups of health-care workers who travelled from one facility to another to provide legal abortion services. In other provinces, such as Buenos Aires, a group of medical facilities provided such services. If all the doctors in a given facility refused to perform an abortion, it would have to be performed by the facility's director, who did not have the right of conscientious objection.

16. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that she wished to know what the procedure for gaining access to antiretroviral therapy was and whether reproductive health services were made available to young people, in particular in schools. She would also welcome information about the prevalence and treatment of tuberculosis in the State party, especially in people living with HIV/AIDS. In addition, she wondered whether efforts to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV were made throughout the State party, including in remote areas.

17. **Ms. Fariña** (Argentina) said that 60 per cent of the persons with HIV/AIDS in Argentina were treated in the public health system, where they received access to antiretroviral drugs free of charge for as long as necessary. Some schools offered confidential health counselling and information to their students. That service, which was being offered in an increasing number of schools, was provided by a health-care worker, although not necessarily a doctor. Students could leave those counselling sessions with an appointment at the nearest health-care facility already made. Data on the prevalence of tuberculosis in Argentina could be provided in writing. Measures had been adopted to lower the rate of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. For example, the country currently had a policy of testing couples for sexually transmitted diseases early and late in the woman's pregnancy.

18. Under the National Mental Health Act, the commitment of a minor to a mental hospital or other such institution was considered an involuntary commitment. Reports of all such commitments were to be provided to the courts and the relevant oversight bodies within 10 hours. The Act also regulated the prescription of drugs for the treatment of such conditions as attention deficit disorder. In addition, guidelines had been developed to prevent school-related issues from leading to inappropriate medical diagnoses and treatment.

19. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** (Country Task Force) asked whether the State party had information on the number of children who were on drugs like Ritalin for such conditions as attention deficit disorder.

20. **Ms. Fariña** (Argentina) said that many children with conditions such as attention deficit disorder were treated in the private health system. As a result, the public health authorities did not have access to their records or know how many were on medication such as Ritalin.

21. Environmental agencies were present throughout the country, and legislation on the use of agricultural chemicals had been adopted in 23 of the country's jurisdictions. Specific regulations had been adopted for the municipalities where agricultural activity was especially intense. Environmental targets had been included in a national plan on adolescent health, and in the provinces of Chubut and Córdoba young people themselves had brought environmental health issues to the attention of the authorities, who were responding to their concerns.

22. Maternal and infant mortality rates differed from one province to another. Over the past 10 years, however, the rates had fallen, in some cases, as in Chaco Province, by as much as 40 per cent. The Ministry of Health developed common policies and provided supplies for the improvement of maternal and child health in all the country's jurisdictions.

23. **Mr. Lumina** (Country Task Force) said that the delegation had not yet responded to his question regarding the reduction in health spending and the measures taken to ensure that it did not affect children's access to quality health care. In addition, he would appreciate more information on the steps taken to address the geographical disparities in the provision of quality health services.

24. **Ms. Fariña** (Argentina) said that health care was a priority for the Government and that there had been no reduction in the health funding granted to provincial authorities. On the contrary, additional support was made available to those authorities at their request.

25. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said that the Government helped provincial authorities to cover the cost of particularly expensive treatments on an ad hoc basis.

26. **Mr. Candiano** (Argentina) said that popular consultations had been organized by the government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires to determine the approximate number of children in street situations. Measures had subsequently been taken to assist those children and their parents or guardians. New legislation that had been approved in 2017 established a mentoring scheme for children aged 13 years and above who were living in children's homes. Mentors were chosen by the children themselves from a list supplied by the authorities or from among their acquaintances. The National Secretariat for Children, Young Persons and the Family organized training for mentors, whose role was to provide information and support in all areas of life.

27. The National Secretariat was developing minimum standards of care and protocols for children's homes, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Registers of children under exceptional protective measures were being created in some provinces. According to a national survey on support for children without parental care, around 10,500 children had benefited from exceptional protective measures in 2017.

28. **Ms. Sandberg** (Country Task Force) said that she would welcome more information on the practical measures being taken to give effect to the new law on mentoring, in view of reports that it had not been implemented effectively in all institutions throughout the country.

29. **Mr. Gastaud** said that he would like to know what steps were taken to identify and assist children in street situations who did not register at halfway houses; what kind of support was available to children in street situations and their families; whether a general policy had been drawn up in that area; and, if so, whether children had been involved in the development of that policy.

30. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said that the process of enacting the new law on mentoring had not yet been completed. However, many of its provisions had already been implemented in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and Buenos Aires Province. There was no national system for the registration of children in street situations. Programmes for the protection of such children were run at the provincial level.

31. **Mr. Candiano** (Argentina) said that children in street situations who registered at halfway houses were offered food, clothing and additional support, such as a place in a children's home. Community centres for adolescents aged 13 to 17 years old had been set up in urban areas to combat violence against children and adolescents through cultural, recreational and educational activities. Guidance for adolescents was available in the form of information booklets and on the websites of various ministries. Awareness-raising on issues such as cyberbullying and child pornography had been conducted. An online platform had been set up to provide support and information to young persons dealing with issues such as bullying, child grooming and drug use.

32. The Secretariat for Comprehensive Drug Policies of Argentina was responsible for combating drug use among adolescents. It provided technical assistance and training to provincial authorities, community workers and civil society organizations and organized activities in collaboration with community centres for adolescents. It had developed teaching modules on the prevention of drug addiction which were being taught in schools throughout the country. It also promoted the prevention of drug addiction through art and sport by providing training for people working in those fields and by organizing events for young persons in particularly vulnerable areas of the country.

33. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** asked whether children in institutions were no longer eligible for mentoring when they turned 18 years old. He further asked how many community centres for adolescents had been set up and where they were located.

34. **Mr. Candiano** (Argentina) said that mentoring was available for young people up to the age of 21 years old. Those who were enrolled in higher education continued to receive support until the age of 25 or until they had completed their studies. Handbooks on the mentoring scheme were being drafted in collaboration with UNICEF.

35. There were around 180 community centres for adolescents. Local authorities wishing to establish such a centre submitted an application to the national authorities, who provided funding for an initial period of eight months. Once that period had elapsed, the local authorities were responsible for funding the centre.

36. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that she would like to know whether medical care for victims of violence or sexual abuse and young drug users was provided at community centres for adolescents or in hospitals and whether such persons received treatment from qualified specialists, including child psychiatrists.

37. **Mr. Candiano** (Argentina) said that community centres carried out screening and referred adolescents to health centres if necessary.

38. **Ms. Fariña** (Argentina) said that treatment for adolescent drug users was provided by public hospitals. In the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and Buenos Aires Province, treatment was also provided by mobile clinics.

39. **Mr. Candiano** (Argentina) said that campaigns to combat alcohol abuse were under way, and a national addiction monitoring centre had been established. A recent national study on substance abuse in secondary schools had shown that almost 14 per cent of alcohol consumers were pre-adolescents and adolescents.

40. Guidelines on the protection of children's rights with respect to the media had been drawn up, based on recommendations from the National Secretariat for Children, Young

Persons and the Family. The National Secretariat had also submitted 17 principles to be included in the bill on communication that was currently before the parliament.

41. The Government had injected additional funding into the Early Years Programme with the aim of increasing its coverage to 180,000 families by 2020. Under that programme, which had been rolled out to 19 provinces, families received guidance on nutrition, breastfeeding, early stimulation and the prevention of domestic violence and child sexual abuse. Lastly, a survey conducted in 2016 had shown that 91 per cent of provinces had established a system to support victims of trafficking.

42. **Ms. Sandberg** enquired whether the 17 principles that were to be included in the bill on communication were related to child protection.

43. **Mr. Candiano** (Argentina) said that all 17 principles were related to the protection of children's rights. There had been no cases of suicide in closed juvenile detention centres since 2016. Two resolutions, on the supervision of those centres during rest periods and the working day of security personnel, had been adopted.

44. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna**, noting that the statistics he had mentioned with regard to suicide concerned the entire five-year review period, said that he would be interested to learn what specific measures had been taken to prevent suicide among adolescent detainees, besides the two resolutions that had been mentioned.

45. **Mr. Candiano** (Argentina) said that adolescent detainees at risk of suicide received support, including psychiatric treatment. The Government had adopted a plan to provide quality Internet access throughout the country. Steps were being taken to extend fibre optic coverage to 1,300 towns by the end of 2018. Internet access was currently available to almost three quarters of the population.

46. **Mr. Ibarzabal** (Argentina) said that the State party had launched a digital programme to provide students with laptops and familiarize them with the Internet. Six million laptops had been provided during the first phase of the programme over the past eight years. The results of the most recent annual quality of education survey had shown that almost all children had a mobile phone by the time they left secondary school and the majority had access to a computer at home. The second phase of the programme, which was ongoing, involved teaching children the necessary skills to leverage the technology to which they now had access.

47. With regard to the Committee's questions on disability, under the 2010 Migration Act, access to social security, and in particular disability benefit, was considered a human right. The Government provided three different types of disability benefit, without any age limits. The first was a contributory benefit linked to employment. The second was a non-contributory disability benefit for children, which could be claimed by parents or guardians in addition to universal child allowance. Foreign children or adolescents could claim disability benefits after having lived in the country for three years. The third, the pension for disability, was also non-contributory. In 2018, 132,000 individuals had received that pension, of whom 12 per cent were under the age of 18. The Government was working with UNICEF to improve data collection on children with disabilities. Furthermore, the National Institute for Statistics and Censuses had launched a national study on the profiles of persons with disabilities, which would inform public policy.

48. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said that the budget for non-contributory benefits had not been reduced, in fact it was increasing as those benefits were adjusted twice a year. The budget appeared to have been reduced owing to institutional reorganization within the Government.

49. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** said that he would like the State party to comment on reports that laptops would no longer be provided directly to children. He would like to know whether the programme was continuing.

50. **Mr. Ibarzabal** (Argentina) said that the programme was now in its second phase. In the light of the fact that a large majority of children now had access to a computer, the Ministry was focusing on providing information technology training. Laptops were still being provided to schools.

51. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said that it was important to note that technology was developing so quickly that any information technology equipment was often obsolete within a couple of years.

52. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** asked whether disability benefits were being increased in line with inflation, which was very high in the State party. He said that he would be interested to know whether foreigners who were living and working legally in the country were able to access any social benefits within their first three years of residency. Noting that the Government did not have any reliable, comprehensive or disaggregated statistics regarding children with disabilities, he wondered how a lack of data affected measures taken in that area and whether a request had to be made for data to be collected, especially in rural areas.

53. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said that benefits were adjusted twice a year in line with inflation, and non-contributory pensions had been established for persons with disabilities who were unable to work. Non-residents had access to free health care and education but were not entitled to disability benefits. The Government was concerned that children, including children with disabilities, in rural areas were not receiving universal child benefit. Consequently, under a programme established in 2016, a team travelled to remote communities to ensure that citizens were aware of their rights and had the necessary documentation to claim welfare benefits, including for disability.

The meeting was suspended at 11.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.55 a.m.

54. **Ms. Dobniewsky** (Argentina), responding to questions about the juvenile criminal justice system, said that, prior to the drafting of the juvenile criminal justice bill, a survey had been carried out at the federal level to ascertain how the Convention was being applied throughout the country. The results of the survey showed that the justice systems of many provinces conformed to the Convention and provided for alternative measures to deprivation of liberty. However, there was some resistance to the application of those alternative measures in the juvenile criminal justice system. Consequently, the Government had decided that any future law in that regard should be accompanied by relevant policies and practical measures.

55. The juvenile criminal justice bill, which had been developed with the collaboration of UNICEF and representatives of provincial governments and was aimed at harmonizing existing good practices across provinces, provided for specialized courts, training for law enforcement and the judiciary on children's rights and restorative measures, and alternative conflict resolution measures, including mediation and restorative agreements. An interdisciplinary team, including a counsellor, would be assigned to each juvenile case to assist the courts and help the child to plan his or her future. With regard to sentencing, socio-educational sanctions were preferred to disciplinary measures and the detention of children was seen as a last resort, in accordance with international human rights standards. The Ministry of Justice was working with relevant experts to develop training programmes on juvenile criminal mediation and restorative justice for practitioners. Various ministries were cooperating to carry out a budgetary analysis, which would ensure the necessary resources for the implementation of the draft law.

56. The Ministry of Justice and the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and the Family were working jointly to address the issue of children who were incarcerated with their mothers. Among other things, efforts were being made to increase the use of home detention as an alternative to the imprisonment of pregnant women and mothers. Currently, a total of 36 children were incarcerated with their mothers; the two prisons concerned had paediatric teams, nurses and ambulances that were available at all times, and developmental, nutritional and educational support teams.

57. **Ms. Cardarelli** (Argentina) said that the Education Act explicitly referred to the need to provide for the education of children aged from 45 days to 4 years who were born or lived in prison with their mother through a range of services provided both within and outside prison establishments. Efforts were made to ensure that, to the extent possible, such children attended nursery schools outside the prison. The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with provincial education authorities and the prison service, had established intersectoral workshops to review the provision of education on an ongoing basis.

Guidelines for education in the context of imprisonment had been developed, which would help to achieve full educational inclusion.

58. **Ms. Dobniewsky** (Argentina), responding to the question about suicide in juvenile detention centres, said that a working group consisting of various stakeholders had been set up to develop relevant guidelines and protocols for prison staff. The Prison System Ombudsman, who investigated all cases of suicide in prisons, had recently begun working with juvenile detention centres and had made draft recommendations on suicide prevention, which would be implemented in due course.

59. Regarding the case of a Wichi girl who had been denied a non-punishable abortion, the National Institute to Combat Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism had concluded that the inaction of the relevant authorities in that case amounted to discrimination. The Ombudsman had initiated legal action, which was ongoing.

60. A national programme was in place to provide assistance to victims of all kinds of sexual and domestic violence, including sexual crimes such as child pornography. The programme provided a hotline in Buenos Aires and a mobile team that attended to victims. In 2016 and 2017, a large number of the calls received by the hotline were from children. The National Trafficking Victims Rescue and Assistance Programme was present in all provinces and provided interdisciplinary teams that offered psychological, social, medical and legal assistance to victims. Law enforcement had received specialized training in attending to victims of trafficking, and a dedicated hotline had been set up for the reporting of such crimes.

61. **Ms. Cardarelli** (Argentina) said that the Ministry of Education and Sport had taken initiatives to improve access to education, and goals in that regard had been included in the National Plan on Human Rights. Those goals included guaranteeing equal access to primary and secondary education for all, free of charge. Steps were being taken to ensure full coverage of early childhood education, for children aged three to five years, by providing new classrooms, broadening teacher training, and equipping schools with technology. A particular focus was being placed on pre-primary school, since the completion of preschool education had proven to reduce the likelihood of school dropout later. Efforts were being made to improve primary-level education by increasing the duration of the school day, enhancing teacher training, and through the *Escuela Faro* (Flagship School) programme, which aimed to improve attainment in mathematics and languages. Under the programme, 1,500 primary and 1,500 secondary schools would be identified for assistance. At the secondary level, the *Secundaria* 2030 (Secondary Education 2030) programme had been developed for the restructuring of secondary education, including by setting goals for increasing enrolment, reducing repetition, and increasing retention rates by 2030. Significant challenges persisted in that regard, in particular for young people from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds. An attendance programme was also in place to improve early detection of potential truancy, and to ensure coordination between schools, families and communities in order to provide the necessary psychological and academic support to prevent it.

62. A comprehensive national digital education plan had been adopted to bring education into the digital era and ensure that all students were provided with the skills they would need to flourish in the modern world. A variety of digital programmes were in place, which allowed for creative learning through access to technology. Under the comprehensive plan, some 10,000 teachers received information communication technology (ICT) training each year. Education on sexual and reproductive health was also being strengthened through a Ministry of Education and Sport plan to reduce unplanned early pregnancy, which was closely associated with school dropouts. The plan was being rolled out at the provincial level, in provinces that had been identified as in need of support owing to their rates of early pregnancy. Virtual courses on sexual and reproductive health were also being developed.

63. Regarding access to education for children with disabilities, funds were being allocated to adapting school infrastructure and increasing accessibility to improve the inclusivity of mainstream schools. A literacy plan had been developed at the federal level, with input from the provinces, to ensure that all children were able to read and write.

64. **Ms. Quinteros** (Argentina) said that the sale of weapons was closely monitored; the political, security and human rights situations in the country of destination were taken into account, and no weapons were sold in countries where minors were forcibly recruited into armed conflict. Regarding forced evictions of indigenous peoples, such procedures had been suspended in accordance with the law. In 2017, indigenous people had been moved from the Nahuel Huapi national park, which was a private estate, in a procedure that had not constituted a forced eviction. One disappearance was being investigated. Prior, free and informed consent was applied in all matters relating to indigenous communities and the use of land by transnational companies. Argentina was party to the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No.169) of the International Labour Organization. A participatory council for indigenous peoples had been established.

65. Migration and refugee issues were addressed using a human rights-based approach, with a strong awareness of the positive contribution that migrants made to the Argentine economy. Particular efforts were made to regulate the status of migrants from Colombia and the Dominican Republic by granting them permanent residency. Regarding child migrants, any child with at least one Argentine parent had the right to permanent residency in Argentina. Measures had been in place since 2012 to provide lasting solutions for unaccompanied minors, which had been applied in the cases of children arriving in Argentina from Africa. With regard to Decree No. 70/2017, amending migration law, any migrant in conflict with the law could be deported. Special dispensation was applied when criminal offences were committed by migrants under the age of 13 years. Family reunification remained a priority. There were currently no children awaiting deportation. Lastly, with regard to the concerns raised on child labour an executive decree had been issued in 2016 prohibiting the worst forms of child labour, and in 2017, 10 agreements had been concluded with tobacco producers to prevent the employment of children in tobacco factories.

66. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said that draft legislation concerning trafficking in children would be finalized once agreement had been reached on the definition of an "intermediary" who facilitated trafficking. Telephone hotlines for children operated at the provincial level, with financial support from the federal Government. Consideration was being given to the establishment of an alternative national telephone line. Decree No. 160 (2018) provided for the establishment of a national disability agency, which would be responsible for bringing together all services relating to persons with disabilities, to ensure accessibility of services. Regarding juvenile justice, the number of minors in custody or being brought before the courts had reduced over recent years. Procedures for bringing young people into detention were established at the provincial level. Young defendants had the support of their relatives, the children's ombudsman and a family lawyer. Lastly, efforts to reduce unplanned early pregnancy were particularly important, since pregnancy was the cause of 30 per cent of secondary school dropouts. Some 67 per cent of unemployed young people were teenage mothers. The Government was therefore doing its utmost to retain girls in secondary education, and to include young mothers in education, society and the economy.

67. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** asked how, and by whom, the decision was made that a child with disabilities should attend a special school, rather than being integrated into mainstream education.

68. **Ms. Cardarelli** (Argentina) said that every effort was made to include children with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and social difficulties into mainstream education, with an inclusive vision for the duration of schooling and a pathway for graduation to ensure that they left school with qualifications. All children attended mainstream preschool education, unless they had a particularly serious disability. Integration into mainstream primary and secondary schooling was decided at the provincial level, by interdisciplinary teams who looked into children's specific schooling needs on a case-by-case basis. The number of inclusive schools was increasing and the number of special needs schools was being reduced. All possible measures were being taken to maximize inclusive education.

69. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** said that the Committee had asked a considerable number of questions to obtain the maximum amount of information and thus enable it to issue the most appropriate and effective recommendations. He thanked the delegation for the

information provided, and recalled that a 48-hour period would ensue, during which further information could be submitted.

70. Argentina had rich resources and a diverse culture, which were the source of great potential. The Committee continued to be concerned about the economic situation and urged the State party to ensure that any austerity measures would not have a negative impact on children. Efforts to establish the Children's Ombudsman were especially welcome; cooperation with parliament would help to expedite the process. Juvenile justice should be addressed as a matter of urgency. The Committee's detailed recommendations would be communicated to the State party in due course. The Government was encouraged to use them as a roadmap to navigate the challenges related to the rights of children and adolescents, and to disseminate them broadly, in particular among children and young people, in accessible language, including the languages of the indigenous peoples.

71. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said he wished to thank the Committee for its questions, which had been motivated by the best of intentions. The reporting procedure had helped the Government to review its efforts to implement the Committee's previous recommendations and to consider how to proceed with the implementation of those that remained pending. The economic situation was indeed of concern, in particular since those most severely affected tended to be those who already lived in poverty or situations of vulnerability. The utmost efforts would be made to reduce inflation, increase employment and stabilize the economy. His Government was committed to furthering all initiatives related to promoting the rights of the child, focusing on change for those who were most vulnerable, to break the cycle of poverty. Although much remained to be done to ensure that no child was left behind, the Government was determined and committed to implementing the Committee's recommendations as swiftly and effectively as possible.

The meeting rose at 1.00 p.m.